

United States Marine Corps  
School of Advanced Warfighting  
Marine Corps University  
2076 South Street  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

FUTURE WAR PAPER

OPERATIONALIZING DISTRIBUTED OPERATIONS:  
ENLISTED MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS AND SOLUTIONS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER  
OF OPERATIONAL STUDIES

**AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Christian F. Wortman, U.S.  
Marine Corps**

AY 2006-2007

**Mentor: Lieutenant General Paul Van Viper, USMC (Ret) and  
Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Woodbridge, USMC**

**Approved:\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date:\_\_\_\_\_**

| REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE  |  | FORM APPROVED - - - OMB NO. 0704-0188                              |                            |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| <small>public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters services, directorate for information operations and reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.</small>   |  |  |                            |
| 1. AGENCY USE ONLY (LEAVE BLANK)   | 2. 05/16/05  | 3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED<br><b>STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER</b>  |                            |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE<br><br>OPERATIONALIZING DISTRIBUTED OPERATIONS: ENLISTED MANPOWER SOLUTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS   |  | 5. FUNDING NUMBERS<br><br><b>N/A</b>                               |                            |
| 6. AUTHOR(S)<br>CHRISTIAN F. WORTMAN, LIEUTENANT COLONEL, US MARINE CORPS  |  |  |                            |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)<br><br><b>USMC COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE<br/>2076 SOUTH STREET, MCCDC, QUANTICO, VA 22134-5068</b>  |  | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER<br><br><b>NONE</b>        |                            |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)<br><br><b>SAME AS #7.</b>  |  | 10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER<br><br><b>NONE</b>  |                            |
| 11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES<br><b>NONE</b>   |  |  |                            |
| 12A. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT<br><b>NO RESTRICTIONS</b>   |  | 12B. DISTRIBUTION CODE<br><b>N/A</b>                               |                            |
| 13. ABSTRACT (MAXIMUM 200 WORDS)<br>As the Marine Corps works to achieve a Distributed Operations (DO) capability across its 24 infantry battalions, its efforts are undermined by its own enlisted recruiting, assignment, and training policies. These policies must be updated to better reflect the contemporary operating environment and the demands on small unit infantry leaders. As currently planned, Distributed Operations (DO) promises tremendous gains in the combat power and combat effectiveness of Marine infantry units, but it will not meet its maximum potential, nor will it meet the demands of the current and future operating environments. Despite the significant potential benefits of more advanced small-unit and small-unit leader training; improved and more widely fielded communications equipment and optics; and operating methods that exploit the increased capabilities derived from these advances; Distributed Operations fails to deliver its full promise because it remains rooted in industrial age personnel procurement and manpower management models. For Distributed Operations to meet its potential, the Marine Corps must fundamentally redesign its enlisted personnel procurement policies, training and education programs, and assignment practices. This paper will address that "redesign" focused on infantry squad leaders, the foundational Distributed Operations leaders. |  |  |                            |
| 14. SUBJECT TERMS (KEY WORDS ON WHICH TO PERFORM SEARCH)<br><br>DISTRIBUTED OPERATIONS, MANPOWER, RECRUITING, ENLISTED ASSIGNMENTS, ENLISTED TRAINING AND EDUCATION, INFANTRY TRAINING, ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING  |  | 15. NUMBER OF PAGES:<br><br>30                                     |                            |
|  |  | 16. PRICE CODE: N/A  |                            |
| 17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT<br><br><b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>   | 18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE:<br><br><b>UNCLASSIFIED</b> | 19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT<br><br><b>UNCLASSIFIED</b> | 20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT |

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Title:** Operationalizing Distributed Operations: Enlisted Manpower Requirements and Solutions

**Author:** Lieutenant Colonel Christian F. Wortman, U.S. Marine Corps

**Thesis:** As the Marine Corps works to achieve a Distributed Operations (DO) capability across its 24 infantry battalions (with three additional battalions being formed in fiscal years 2007 and 2008), its efforts are undermined by its own enlisted recruiting, assignment, and training policies. These policies must be updated to better reflect the contemporary operating environment and the demands on small-unit infantry leaders.

**Discussion:** As currently planned, Distributed Operations (DO) promises tremendous gains in the combat power and combat effectiveness of Marine infantry units, but it will not meet its maximum potential, nor will it meet the demands of the current and future operating environments. Despite the significant potential benefits of more advanced small-unit and small-unit leader training; improved and more widely fielded communications equipment and optics; and operating methods that exploit the increased capabilities derived from these advances; Distributed Operations fails to deliver its full promise because it remains rooted in industrial age personnel procurement and manpower management models. For Distributed Operations to meet its potential, as well as for the Marine Corps to deliver its full value to our Nation, the Marine Corps must fundamentally redesign its enlisted personnel procurement policies, training and education programs, and assignment practices. This paper will address that "redesign" focused on infantry squad leaders, the foundational Distributed Operations leaders.

**Recommendations:** To maximize the value of the Distributed Operations concept, the Marine Corps should adjust its recruiting, assignment, and training and education policies for enlisted 03XX Marines, to include:

- Assign a fixed percentage of upper mental categories (I-IIIA, as scored on the ASVAB) infantry programs to

the Recruiting Command for an annual accession mission to ensure the intellectual capacity for small-unit leader in a contemporary operating environment.

- Eliminate "Category IV" mental group accessions into the infantry and eliminate the current "bubble" of "Category IV" Marines in the infantry, or - at a minimum - restrict such infantry military occupation specialty (MOS) assignments to no more than the Marine Corps' annual "Category IV" allowance of one percent of all new recruits.
- Develop and implement mandatory MOS progression training for infantry Marines.
- Defer assignment of infantry Marines to B-Billets until after completion of 8 years of operational assignment and the completion of mandatory sergeant MOS progression training.
- Evaluate, in conjunction with behavioral scientists and psychologists, the moral (i.e. law enforcement) and drug waiver criteria for assignment to the infantry. Eliminate the infantry as one of the few enlistment programs with no moral or prior-service drug use quality standards.
- Ensure that all Marines enlisted into the infantry are eligible for a Secret clearance, and are not disqualified from such a clearance by prior-service drug use or law enforcement involvement. This will ensure that these Marines are eligible to utilize the intelligence systems and programs on which DO relies.
- Incorporate ethical combat decision-making exercises, training, and education in to all levels of infantry MOS progression training, as well as into all service-level infantry training programs. Important components of this training should include weaponeering, battlefield geometry, culture, detainee operations, search procedures, the incorporation of information and civil-military operations into small-unit tactical planning and actions, the use of intelligence tools and resources to gain precision in small-unit operations, historical case studies of battlefield atrocities, the psychology of killing and long-term battlefield exposure, and decision-making models for complex environments.

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## **Introduction**

As currently planned, Distributed Operations (DO) promises tremendous gains in the combat power and combat effectiveness of Marine infantry units, but it will not meet its full potential, nor will it meet the demands of the current and future operating environments. Despite the significant potential benefits of more advanced small-unit and small-unit leader training; improved and more widely fielded communications equipment and optics; and operating methods that exploit the increased capabilities derived from these advances; Distributed Operations fails to deliver its promise because it remains rooted in industrial age personnel procurement and manpower management models. For Distributed Operations to meet its maximum potential, as well as for the Marine Corps to optimize its value to our Nation, the Marine Corps must fundamentally redesign its enlisted personnel procurement policies, training and education programs, and assignment practices. This paper will address that "redesign" focused on infantry squad leaders, the foundational Distributed Operations leaders.

## **What is Distributed Operations and How Is It Being Implemented?**

Distributed Operations is many things to many people: a vehicle for obtaining funding for advanced technologies and training for infantry units, a process for pushing supporting arms coordination and clearance authority to lower levels, an operating method that stresses the dispersion of small-units over significantly larger tracts of battlespace, and/or a comprehensive vision for more capable small-units with a broad array of enhanced skills. Formally defined, Distributed Operations is "an operating approach that will create an advantage over an adversary through the deliberate use of separation and coordinated, interdependent, tactical actions enabled by increased access to functional support, as well as by enhanced combat capabilities at the small-unit level. The essence of this concept lies in the capacity for coordinated action by dispersed units, throughout the breadth and depth of the battlespace, ordered and connected within an operational design focused on a common aim."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> General Michael Hagee, "A Concept for Distributed Operations", in *Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment*, ed. Concepts and Plans Division, Marine Corps Warfighting Lab, (Quantico, 2006) 95.



Just as importantly, at its core, Distributed Operations are the inevitable continuation of the historical trend towards greater tactical dispersion and lower-level decision-making authority as the lethality, precision, and effective range of weapons increase; as communication systems enable much improved connectivity to lower echelons; and as ISR systems gain a more persistent presence, as well as the ability to capture, process, and disseminate greater volumes of intelligence information at significantly greater resolutions. Despite wide-ranging opinions within and outside the Marine Corps on the practicality and mechanics of Distributed Operations, more dispersed small-unit operations are not just technologically feasible today, but they may also be the inevitable adaptation to today's technological landscape, following the historical trend line toward greater tactical dispersion and greater small-unit independence on the battlefield. Failure to prepare for and adapt to the conditions created by today's technology has the same potential consequences as the use of open order tactics against a defense in depth with machine guns and modern artillery.

To operationalize DO, the Marine Corps has pursued and implemented an impressive array of initiatives across the

Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership, People, and Facilities (DOTMLPF) combat development process. A quick review of major initiatives includes:

- The Training and Education Command (TECOM) has developed the Infantry Battalion Enhancement Period Program (IBEPP) in conjunction with Manpower Management Enlisted Assignments (MMEA), Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps. The IBEPP is designed to assign small-unit leaders to infantry battalions prior to the start of deployment "work-ups", ahead of the arrival of new Marines from the School of Infantry, and in time for small-unit leader formal schools training. As part of the IBEPP, TECOM has developed and begun implementation of more rigorous formal schools training for rifle and weapons company leaders from the fire team through company commander level. As part of this program, noncommissioned and staff noncommissioned officers returning to the operating forces from B-Billets will be ordered by MMEA to attend these courses en route from their B-billet to their new units.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Lieutenant General James Amos, "Distributed Operations (DO) Overview for the Commandant of the Marine Corps" Brief, 20 October 2006; and Major General O. K. Steele, USMC (Ret),

- The Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL) is pursuing - in coordination with Manpower Management Enlisted Assignments (MMEA) - reenlistment incentives for first-term 03XX noncommissioned officers to reenlist and remain in their infantry battalion. This reenlistment incentive initiative is designed to retain experienced small-unit leaders on station and to fill each squad leader billet in the operating forces with sergeants with 5-7 years time in service.<sup>3</sup>
- The Sea Viking Division, Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL), has developed a series of experiments from the rifle squad through Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) levels for testing new DO-related concepts, assessing current capabilities, and identifying critical conceptual, material, and personnel shortfalls. To date, the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory has completed one Advanced Warfighting Experiment (AWEs) and two Limited Objective Experiments (LOEs) on various aspects of Distributed

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"Raising and Sustaining the Competence of Our Combat Small Unit Leaders" Brief, 6 February 2006.

<sup>3</sup>Commanding General, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, 14 April 2006 letter to Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Subj: ASSIGNMENT INCENTIVE PAY (AIP) FOR 03XX SMALL UNIT LEADERS.

Operations. Additional experimentation is planned for fiscal years 2007 and 2008.<sup>4</sup>

- The Commandant of the Marine Corps has secured nearly \$800 million for DO capability sets for all infantry battalions and the School of Infantry. These capability sets provide the baseline equipment requirements for DO implementation and include a significant enhancement and increase to rifle squads' optics, weapons systems, communications gear, medical kits, and navigation equipment.<sup>5</sup>
- The Marine Corps has established the Center for Advanced Operational Culture and Language (CAOCL) designed to integrate culture and language training into individual and unit pre-deployment training and to increase the capability of Marine units in

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<sup>4</sup> Sea Viking Division, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, "Distributed Operations Sustainment Workshop" Brief; and Lieutenant General James Amos, "Distributed Operations (DO) Overview for the Commandant of the Marine Corps" Brief, 20 October 2006.

<sup>5</sup> LtGen Amos, "Distributed Operations (DO) Overview ..." Brief; and MajGen Steele, USMC (Ret), "Raising and Sustaining ..." Brief; and Director, Sea Viking Division, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, "Supporting the Main Effort in America's Global War on Terror" Brief, 2 February 2006.

counterinsurgency operations that require awareness and proficiency in these areas.<sup>6</sup>

These initiatives highlight the extent to which the Marine Corps as an institution has embraced DO as a concept and pursued the 33<sup>rd</sup> Commandant's emphasis on the rapid realization of DO capabilities.

### **The Perfect Storm: The DO Concept + The Contemporary Operating Environment**

Enabling technologies and the conceptualization of Distributed Operations have combined to create an imperative for modernizing our enlisted accessions, assignment, and training and education programs. The contemporary operating environment magnifies the necessity of this modernization and aggravates the shortcomings of our current enlisted personnel system.

The contours of today's operating environment are by now familiar: lethal, reflecting the proliferation of advanced weapons systems to state and non-state actors; dispersed, reflecting the determination and ability of

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<sup>6</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Christian F. Wortman interview notes from 17 October 2006 meeting with Colonel Jeff Bearor, USMC (Ret), Director, Marine Corps Center for Advanced Operational Culture and Language.

adversaries to operate below the "discrimination threshold"<sup>7</sup> in groups small enough to avoid detection by American ISR systems; in complex terrain, particularly urban areas, reflecting the determination of adversaries to constrain our application of force and remain invisible to our ISR systems; ideological, reflecting the racial, ethnic, and religious tensions that have spawned conflict and created substantial regional instability; close, reflecting the violent, short-range meeting engagements that occur in urban areas when widely available advanced weapons systems fall into the hands of racially, ethnically, and ideologically driven adversaries; and global, reflecting the ability of minor tactical actions to have a near immediate strategic, international impact due to the pervasive, 24-hour, global news industry.

Most importantly, however, conflict in today's operating environment is a constant battle for control of and influence over perceptions, ideologies, attitudes, and motivations. Conventional operations have become merely enabling operations that place military forces and their partners from other government agencies in close contact with the local population, where the ultimate decision will

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<sup>7</sup> Australian Army, DRAFT "Adaptive Campaigning", 3 November 2006, 7.

be determined. As suggested in the draft Australian Defense Force operating concept Adaptive Campaigning:

"Contemporary warfighting trends suggest conflict will increasingly involve multiple diverse actors all competing for the allegiances and behaviours of targeted populations. As a consequence, the outcome of future conflict will increasingly be decided in the minds of these populations rather than on the battlefield. Therefore, combat operations can no longer be seen as the decisive phase of conflict ..." <sup>8</sup>

Retired US Army Major General Robert Scales has commented that the current and future operating environment:

"... will cause a shift in classical centers of gravity from the will of governments and armies to the perceptions of populations. Victory will be defined more in terms of capturing the psycho-cultural rather than the geographical high ground." <sup>9</sup>

To confront this seismic shift in the operating environment successfully, our Marines must retain their traditional, conventional military excellence. In addition, the Marine Corps must develop in its junior infantry leaders the capacity to contribute meaningfully in training indigenous military and police forces; to assist in the development of local government; to assist in providing basic services; to work closely with local populations with unfamiliar and - at times - uncomfortable customs and traditions; and to wage and support local, regional, and

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Major General Robert H. Scales, US Army (Ret), "Clausewitz and World War IV", in *Armed Forces Journal*, July 2006, <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/07/1866019>.

international information operations and public affairs campaigns. These skills are fundamentally different than, and are additive to, the traditional warfighting skills that have been the hallmark of the Marine Corps' small-units. Achieving excellence in these skills demands an institution-wide commitment to better enlisted recruiting, training, education, and assignments; and a ruthless determination to rid the Marine Corps of industrial-age personnel practices that treat personnel, training, and education as overhead instead of the critical investment for our Nation's security.

#### **Start With The End In Mind**

To realize the full potential of Distributed Operations, to ensure that the Marine Corps maximizes the return on every defense dollar invested in the Marine Corps by our Nation, and to secure our Nation in a dangerous world requires a more capable small-unit leader. Current practices significantly undermine the Marine Corps efforts to maximize the effectiveness of our small-unit leaders. In a letter to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Lieutenant General James Mattis - in his previous capacity of Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) - cited the Marine Corps' own personnel policies as



being the primary impediment to developing small-unit excellence.<sup>10</sup> These "current practices" - largely residue from an era long past - include:

- A mindset, reflected in qualifying ASVAB scores established by the Marine Corps for assignment to the infantry, that the infantry is a low skill, low technology, intellectually simple Military Occupational Specialty. The infantry MOSs have the lowest qualifying General Technical (GT) and ASVAB scores of any MOS. Applicants for enlistment may be enlisted into the infantry with a "Category IV" ASVAB score and an 80 GT score, the lowest qualifying GT score accepted for enlistment in the Marine Corps, lower even than the standard for an "open contract".<sup>11</sup> Applicants with a GT score between 80 and 89 are only eligible to enlist in the infantry. In fact, the infantry has a 452% greater rate of "Category IV"

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<sup>10</sup>Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 5 July 2006, letter to Commandant of the Marine Corps, Subj: SMALL UNIT EXCELLENCE CONFERENCE RESULTS. This letter cites training and education as the critical elements of small unit excellence, as well as the inadequacies of the Marine Corps' manpower management system in optimizing the training and education of enlisted leaders.

<sup>11</sup> MCO 1130.53P, Subj: ENLISTMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS, enclosure 6, Enlistment Incentive Programs Matrix, Instructions, and Standards, dtd 11 Jun 02, and Marine Corps Recruiting Command Enlistment Options Program Summary Sheet, dtd 30 Jan 07.

Marines than the annual allowable rate of "Category IV" enlistments (1%) into the Marine Corps.<sup>12</sup>

- No mandatory MOS progression training for infantry Marines. While many Marines do attend the squad leaders' course or platoon sergeants' course, as well as the recently implemented IBEPP courses for small-unit leaders, these courses are not mandatory for MOS progression. An infantry Marine may serve from the rank of Private through Master Gunnery Sergeant without any additional, formal MOS training beyond the entry-level training.
- Assignment practices that largely make the five to eight year sergeant an extremely rare commodity in the operating forces. Infantry Marines that reenlist upon completion of their first contract are largely reassigned as recruiters, drill instructors, Marine Security Guards, and School of Infantry instructors, leaving a tremendous void in the operating forces for experienced squad leaders.<sup>13</sup> As noted in the section addressing initiatives to operationalize DO, the

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<sup>12</sup>Headquarters Marine Corps, Manpower Management Information Systems Information Systems Division email dtd 31 Dec 06, Subj: Data Pull Request.

<sup>13</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Christian F. Wortman interview notes from meeting with Major Thomas Tennant, Enlisted Assignments, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps.

Commanding Generals of the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory and the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, as well as the Deputy Commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, are working to develop and implement incentives for these Marines to stay in the operating forces in squad leaders' billets.<sup>14</sup> The assignment of sergeants with five to eight years time-in-service to lead each of the Marine Corps 648 rifle squads should be an absolute requirement across the Marine Corps.

- A lack of appreciation for the role of small-unit leader in providing - at the fire team and squad level - the "moral anchor" required for prolonged combat operations, in an environment in which conventional operations have become enabling operations to the decisive effort to secure the support and loyalty of indigenous populations. Once an applicant is accepted for enlistment, no amount of prior drug use, felony convictions, or dependents can disqualify an applicant for assignment to the infantry. In fact, the infantry is one of the few MOSs that a recruit with multiple

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<sup>14</sup>Commanding General, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, 14 April 2006 letter to Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Subj: ASSIGNMENT INCENTIVE PAY (AIP) FOR 03XX SMALL UNIT LEADERS.

<sup>15</sup> While it is beyond the scope of this paper, the Marine Corps must work with behavioral scientists and psychologists to better identify parameters for enlistment into the infantry in an effort to strengthen the capacity for strong and effective ethical combat decision-making in the "pool" of future small-unit infantry leaders.

In ten years, every rifle squad should be led by a sergeant with the following basic profile:

- A demonstrated record or capacity for ethical combat decision-making in an independent, chaotic, and hostile environment. A commonly cited center of gravity for the United States during prolonged military operations is the will of the American people; in an operating environment in which the support and allegiance of indigenous populations will often be the decisive factor for military success; during a time when instant-access, global media is

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<sup>15</sup> MCO 1130.53P, Subj: ENLISTMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS, enclosure 6, Enlistment Incentive Programs Matrix, Instructions, and Standards, dtd 11 Jun 02, and Marine Corps Recruiting Command Enlistment Options Program Summary Sheet, dtd 30 Jan 07.

bolstered by ever-present personal digital cameras and video cameras ready to record and disseminate every shameful mistake. Ethical combat decision-making is at a premium in this environment! The United States, and its Marine Corps, cannot accept the strategic liability of ethically unfit small-unit leaders and must have leaders of strong, sound character. The Marine Corps must work with behavioral scientists and psychologists to review the process for identifying and recruiting these future leaders, and in particular scrutinize the moral and drug waiver criteria for enlistment into the infantry.

- Trained and educated extensively in ethical combat decision-making. The Marine Corps must integrate into its entire training and education continuum - again with the help of behavioral scientists - operational decision-making exercises that cultivate timely, tactically sound, ethical decision-making built on American values and the prescribed rules of engagement. Important considerations for ethical combat decision-making, and "threads" for this training, should include weaponeering, battlefield geometry, culture, detainee operations, search procedures, the incorporation of information and

- Recruited from the most talented and capable segments of the American population. Small-unit infantry leaders today, and increasingly in the future in a DO environment, have some of the most critical and challenging responsibilities on the battlefield. They should be recruited with the expectation that they will operate extremely sophisticated, technical equipment; will operate independently in complex environments; and will routinely coordinate and execute complicated tactical actions. As such, the Recruiting Command should be required to access a fixed percentage from the upper mental categories (I-III A), with no moral (i.e. law enforcement) or drug waivers above the Recruiting Station-level, into the infantry programs to ensure that the future leadership "pool" can effectively master the technical and operational demands of today's environment and

Distributed Operations. Today, the Marine Corps has no comprehensive strategy for recruiting a deep pool from which to cultivate and develop these leaders. As stated above, there are absolutely no disqualifying factors for service in the infantry once accepted for enlistment. Just as damning, the Marine Corps has no goals for recruiting a certain percentage of new recruits from the upper mental groups (Category I-III A), with no moral or drug waivers above the RS-level, for service in the infantry.<sup>16</sup> The Marine Corps must establish significant enlistment incentives, and high standards for those incentive programs, to attract the highest caliber applicants to infantry MOSs in the same manner the Marine Corps currently targets high quality applicants to serve as linguists,

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<sup>16</sup> As the Marine Corps increases its active duty end strength to 202,000, and annual accession requirements increase significantly as a result, there is an inevitable tension between the "quality" recruit required to "grow" a Distributed Operations non-commissioned officer, and the pressing requirement to meet the annual recruiting mission. Increased felony waivers and drug waivers, increased accessions from lower mental groups (Category III-B and IV), and higher rates of non-high school graduates are incompatible with the requirements of the Distributed Operations concept and the contemporary operating environment. These statistical indicators must be carefully tracked and scrutinized. As the Marine Corps implements the DO concept, our recruiting standards should be higher and more stringent. The Marine Corps cannot afford a lower standard in pursuit of the 202,000 end strength.

intelligence specialists, and aviation mechanics.<sup>17</sup> The Marine Corps is in position to be selective in assigning Marines into the infantry, requiring higher standards for enlistment into the infantry MOSs. As of 30 January 2007, just four months or 33%, into fiscal year 2007, over 77% of the fiscal year's infantry programs had been assigned, utilizing no incentive programs to attract high quality applicants to the infantry.<sup>18</sup>

- Completed an intensive and extended Squad Leaders' Qualification Course that includes advanced instruction in weapons, patrolling, offensive and defensive operations, supporting arms (to include Joint Tactical Air Controller training), communication systems, combat trauma aid, language, culture, regional studies, leadership, combat physiology and psychology, information operations, public affairs, foreign internal defense (FID) training and advising

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<sup>17</sup> MCO 1130.53P, Subj: ENLISTMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS, enclosure 6, Enlistment Incentive Programs Matrix, Instructions, and Standards, dtd 11 Jun 02, and Marine Corps Recruiting Command Enlistment Options Program Summary Sheet, dtd 30 Jan 07.

<sup>18</sup> LtCol C. F. Wortman meeting notes from 30 January 2007 meeting with Mr. Mike Styka, Deputy Head, Enlisted Operations, Enlisted Recruiting, Marine Corps Recruiting Command.



skills, training planning and coordination, combat planning and orders, instructional techniques, and the ethical combat decision-making subjects described above. This course should be the premier enlisted small-unit training and education program in the world and it should be attended by infantry sergeants that have reenlisted with a guarantee to return to the operating forces, or that have recently completed a B-Billet assignment and are returning to the operating forces. This training should be mandatory MOS progression training.

- Have extended infantry battalion experience. The Marine Corps currently has 648 active duty rifle squads and - with the addition of 3 infantry battalions - will soon have 729 active duty rifle squads. Every rifle squad in the operating forces should be led by a sergeant who has completed the course described above, has 5-8 years time in service, and has an unbroken record of experience in the operating forces except for time to attend the Squad Leaders' Qualification Course described above.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This course should be long enough to merit a PCS move, with families, for Marines selected to attend, to ensure the thorough completion of the training curriculum described above, as well as to enable Marines to attend

Career-broadening, B-Billet assignments are critical to the long-term health of the Marine Corps and are the source of significant professional growth for Marines assigned to them. For infantry Marines, they should be deferred to enable the assignment of more experienced Marines to squad leaders billets and to facilitate the development of the skills and experience required by our small-unit leaders.

- Able to receive a security clearance. This issue relates to moral and drug waivers for enlistment and prior-to-service law enforcement involvement, which can be disqualifying for security clearances. In a Distributed Operations environment, small-unit leaders - enabled by computers and communications systems - will need to routinely "pull", analyze, and utilize classified intelligence products critical to operational success - they must be eligible for the clearances required to operate in this environment.

These recommendations will inevitably meet substantial institutional resistance by making recruiting even more challenging, increasing formal school training time and expense, and restricting the availability of infantry

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without an additional geographical separation from their families.

small-unit leaders for B-Billets until later in their careers.<sup>20</sup> These difficult changes can be achieved, however, if the Marine Corps and the Nation are willing to commit the resources to them. These changes are also essential to our ability as a Marine Corps to meet the expectations of our Nation and the demands of future mission accomplishment. The Marine Corps and our Nation simply cannot afford the strategic liability of small-unit leaders not carefully selected, educated, trained, and assigned to their critical role.

**Conclusion: The "Three Block War, Strategic Corporal" Reaches Maturity In The Distributed Operations Squad Leader**

On the widely dispersed, Distributed Operations battlefield, squad leaders will be among the decisive leaders who will make complex tactical decisions; integrate the entire range of lethal and non-lethal capabilities; serve as the "moral anchor" for more junior Marines in confusing, chaotic, and violent environments; and ensure that tactical actions support operational and strategic objectives. The Marine Corps is in the process of implementing policies and programs to adapt to the dynamic

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<sup>20</sup> Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 5 July 2006, letter to Commandant of the Marine Corps, Subj: SMALL UNIT EXCELLENCE CONFERENCE RESULTS.

and challenging contemporary operating environment, but current plans simply do not go far enough. Tweaking anachronistic personnel procurement and manpower management models at the margins fails to compensate for America's greatest strategic vulnerabilities - the loss of American blood in battle and unethical or illegal conduct by Americans in uniform while on the international stage. Our current model for enlisted infantry recruiting, training and education, and assignments simply does not support the demands of the Distributed Operations environment, but the Marine Corps does not have to remain hostage to our current policies and practices.

There are many stops along the DOTMLPF path that lead to the realization of the full potential of DO, but most important are those that ensure our Marines, particularly our junior enlisted infantry leaders, are recruited, trained, educated, and assigned in a manner designed to consistently deliver Marines fully prepared for the unprecedented small-unit leadership responsibilities demanded by the contemporary operating environment and the DO concept. By implementing mandatory MOS progression training for the infantry; eliminating the infantry as a "Category IV" mental aptitude dumping ground; scrutinizing and adjusting the moral and drug use waiver criteria for

assignment to the infantry; deferring B-Billet assignments for infantry Marines until after 8 years time-in-service; and implementing ethical combat decision-making training programs at all levels of the infantry training progression the Marine Corps; the Marine Corps will dramatically strengthen its infantry small-unit leadership core, and ensure that the Marine Corps is far better postured to respond to the challenges to our Nation's security.

## GLOSSARY

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ASVAB   | Armed Services Vocational<br>Aptitude Battery  |
| AWE     | Advanced Warfighting<br>Expirement   |
| CAOCL   | Center for Advanced<br>Operational Culture and<br>Learning                             |
| DO      | Distributed Operations   |
| DOTMLPF | Doctrine, Organization,<br>Training, Material,<br>Leadership, Personnel,<br>Facilities |
| FID     | Foreign Internal Defense   |
| IBEPP   | Infantry Battalion<br>Enhancement Period Program                                       |
| LOE     | Limited Objective Experiment   |
| MAGTF   | Marine Air-Ground Task Force   |
| MCCDC   | Marine Corps Combat<br>Development Command   |
| MCWL    | Marine Corps Warfighting<br>Laboratory   |
| MOS     | Military Occupational<br>Specialty   |
| MMEA    | Enlisted Assignments,<br>Manpower and Reserve Affairs,<br>Headquarters Marine Corps    |
| TECOM   | Training and Education<br>Command (Marine Corps)                                       |

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